

3/10/2005

Subj: Cellular Telephone Use Aboard Airborne Aircraft
Docket - 04-435

To: Federal Communications Commission Wireless Bureau

Although I commend the FCC for wanting to "foster the development of technologies that will increase America's communications options- in this particular case, communications between wireless handsets airborne and on the ground", as a frequent airline traveler, I strongly feel that by allowing the use of cell phones by all passengers in such a confined space (i.e. airplane) will wreak even more havoc in an otherwise chaotic environment. It's bad enough that cell phone technology is invading our spaces everywhere - as we are forced to listen to conversations that we don't want to listen to - such as restaurants, elevators, offices, restrooms, airports, automobiles, walking down the street, malls – basically everywhere!. Now take into account the cramped seats, heavily overbooked flights and the 'enforced' intimacy of the security line – and one can easily see that we are already in possession of more than a little bit too much personal information about the folks next to us, even without the prospect of having private conversations literally shouted into our ears on aircraft – as they are now before the forward cabin door is closed!

Cell phone use (rather "abuse") has gotten out of control and has given rise to a whole new category of extremely bad manners, self-absorption and safety issues (particularly when coupled with driving). I feel that allowing the use of cell phones aboard aircraft is adding insult to injury that will have numerous repercussions. The cabin of an airliner - if anything - should remain sacrosanct. After all, a commercial airline flight is the only place now that the general public can effectively 'escape' from the onslaught of unwanted cell phone conversations by abusers and have a relatively peaceful flight. There is no benefit whatsoever that would come from lifting the current ban. Even Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein said, "The ability to communicate is a vital one, but good cell phone etiquette is also essential."

However I disagree with the 2nd part of his statement - "Our job is to see if this is possible and then let consumers work out the etiquette." Are you kidding me? It's a fallacy to think that the consumers will work out any etiquette whatsoever! Why should the abusers care? Be rest assured, it WILL be abused aboard aircraft just like it currently is elsewhere - and tempers will surely be tested. All you would be doing is to allow it in a different location - an extremely closed environment no less - where there is NO escape at 35,000 feet - and having to listen to numerous conversations going on all at once next to us. Please explain the logic in this thinking? A lot of folks - myself included - enjoy the relative peace and quiet of a flight as an opportunity to conduct some work, read or just rest. I just cannot fathom the thought of listening to someone else's conversation on either side of me and/or in front of or behind me, while they talk on a cell phone the entire flight! I will lose it! Yes, communication is important - but there has to be some balance with it. However, with cell phones, there is no balance. So why does the FCC want to contribute to making problem even worse? People aren't going to "die" if they can't talk to someone while airborne. They aren't NOW!

I don't believe the demand by business travelers (and I am one of them) is such that it warrants lifting the cell phone ban aloft. There are plenty of opportunities for someone to conduct their business on the ground before the aircraft door closes. After all, just how did we all survive prior to the onset of cell phone technology? That aside, the FCC just approved the use of broadband services in the air. So why not let everyone conduct their business that way - via their computers - not via cell phones!

The stated objective of the FCC to "give consumers the choice to use their own wireless devices during flight and to increase the communication options for wireless users – in this case, airborne connectivity – while ensuring there is no increased risk of harmful interference to cellular systems on the ground" should NOT be the main issue that the Commission should be reviewing. You need to look at the overall big picture and the adverse affects of any ruling allowing use of cell phone during flights. The general public does not need more of "cell hell." Those that do not desire

to see this happen have rights too - the right to not have to listen to numerous, simultaneous conversations going on all around us in a confined space. It does have the definite potential of increased tensions and anger with rude passengers who don't care about our rights. It's bad enough we must listen to cell phone abusers in and around other places in our daily lives. I strongly urge the Commission to reconsider any change in policy with regard to allowing cell phone use onboard commercial aircraft in flight. Simply put, it will cause matters to be even more stressful.

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